

Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 2, at line 25, as shown below:

Accordingly, ~~it is an object of the present invention to provide~~ the present invention provides a virtual volume management system and method ~~in a storage area network having for~~ a plurality of virtual volumes available to a user for use in storage and retrieval of user data.

Please replace the paragraphs beginning on page 3, at lines 1, 12 and 23, with the paragraphs shown below:

According to the present invention, then, a system is provided for managing a plurality of virtual storage volumes available to a user for use in storage and retrieval of user data. The system comprises a pool linked to at least one of the plurality of virtual storage volumes, and a controller for automatically allocating a storage device to the pool.

Still further according to the present invention, a method is provided for managing a plurality of virtual storage volumes available to a user for use in storage and retrieval of user data. The method comprises automatically allocating a storage device to a pool and linking at least one of the plurality of virtual storage volumes to the pool.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, a virtual volume management system is provided. The system comprises a plurality of virtual storage volumes available to a user for use in storage and retrieval of user data, a storage pool linked to at least one of the plurality of virtual storage volumes, and a controller for automatically allocating a storage device to the pool.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 4, at line 4, with the paragraph shown below:

Still further according to another embodiment of the present invention, a virtual volume management method is provided. The method comprises providing a plurality of virtual storage volumes available to a user for use in storage and retrieval of user data, and automatically allocating a storage device to a storage pool and linking at least one of the plurality of virtual storage volumes to the pool.